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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

four-poster on which the great Rubens lay, and which is to be seen in the Musée at Antwerp, as well as many of the articles associated with his daily life. How the sight of such things sends the imagination careering over the by-ways of biography! How the fancy dances and rejoices in the sense of an affectionate intimacy with the great and good!

Of course, if we chose to take our readers through the state bedrooms of Buckingham Palace and Hampton Court Palace, not to speak of Windsor Palace and St. James' and Marlborough House, we should find plenty of beds made historical by the fact that royalty has lain in them. But that process would be endless, or almost so. For it would look very insular indeed if we did not somewhat extend our view, even if we did not carry it quite so far as China and Peru, and glance in the same way at the historical beds of France and Germany and Belgium and Italy. That must wait a more auspicious occasion; what we meant to do at present was merely to draw attention to some of the beds that had become famous in literary record; and our readers, we trust, will admit that we have done so. Only a few of royal beds, as of other beds, have been raised to this happy pre-eminence.

GARDENING AS A FINE ART.

BY JAMES CARRUTHERS.

TO skilfully lay out, transplant and trim, a picturesquely arranged, and well stocked garden, is an art in itself, allowing of special refinements in enhancing the scenic effect of nature's colors and forms. A strong incentive exists to good amateur gardening in the fact that it conspicuously indicates individual taste. In not a few countries abroad, with all the personal fancies exercised in laying out a garden, certain national styles assert themselves. The people of Holland, for instance, are fond of shaping trees and bushes so as to represent birds, animals and nondescript creatures in vague form, an extreme of the grotesque which has no justification. The French, who display almost invariably, instinctive tact in the shaping of beds and the grouping of flowers, are fond of introducing a somewhat artificial element in the adornment of walks and parterres with potted dwarf trees set in painted tubs; these often being found in their public squares in such numbers as to suggest improvised gardens. In Italy, gardens are almost invariably planned with the formality of straight walks intersecting each other, long vistas being regarded as particularly charming; their plant beds are artistic studies in the way the plants are disposed in regard to form, height, and color; statuary is extensively introduced, the passion for sculptured works, or casts in cement, being not unfrequently carried somewhat too far. England displays a somewhat cosmopolitan taste, and is renowned for gardens that present every element of attractiveness, and which it is the pride of families of position to maintain in orderly beauty from generation to generation. The Persians, living under a bright sun, delight in providing bowers in which shrubbery and flowers commingle, and fountains, whose sparkling waters are suggestive of coolness. They incline to grouping different classes of flowering plants, each in minute quantities, so as to present severe geometrical shapes suggestive of the patterns on their rugs and carpets. The Chinese are as distinct in their style of garden as in other things; the wealthy among them diversifying the surface with fantastic artificial devices to which nature is quite subordinated. Within a large or small compass they will introduce miniature bridges, tiny streams rippling over pebbly beds, representations of jagged rocks with plants in their crevices, and imitative pagodas perched on their summits, forming altogether a strange environment. In this country there is abundant room for improvement in what may be termed the niceties of gardening, but increased attention is yearly given to the artistic display of flowers and foliage. More labor and greater outlay is bestowed on garden adornment, and nurserymen, who are constantly originating new varieties, are liberally patronized, Amateur work is achieving delightful effects, as in the grouping of flowers with reference to their respective colors, thus forming ideal tableaux, displaying the charm of design in countless combinations. The garden is becoming more and more important for table supply of cut flowers, and for otherwise adorning apartments, particularly in the filling of the beautiful ceramic vases manufactured for the purposes.

WOOD POLISHING.

AN elaborately smooth surface being required for the painting of house and furniture woodwork, this is effected by rubbing the planed wood with either powdered pumice stone, rotten stone, sand-paper or glass-paper. The two first named materials are used in conjunction with oil or water in the rubbing. Rotten stone being the finest of the two, the wood is frequently

gone over with it after the application of the pumice stone. With sand-paper, the grade known as O, is that employed, on account of its brittleness and is usually moistened at back, and drawn over a flat piece of cork. Should the grain of the wood rise from the effect of the water used with the powered stone, it is subsequently gone over again, or where oil would not damage the after coats of color, the finishing touches are done with oil and pumice stone, after the water has dried out. The work of polishing a surface with pumice stone is much slower when oil is used. Sand-papering has to be resorted to three or four times for a first-class finish. Should the grain rise after sand-papering, the usual course is to apply a thin coat of shellac varnish, sand-papering this when dry, or applying pumice stone and water. Whenever oil has been used, powdered starch aids the process of polishing. Turners frequently employ the shavings of the wood for smoothing, as mahogany chips for mahogany. To improve a poor color of mahogany, brick-dust or powdered red chalk is employed; the last named also is sometimes applied to rosewood. Coats of paint, too, in order to secure a finer finish, are treated the same way as raw wood.

THE GRASS OF PARNASSUS DESIGN:

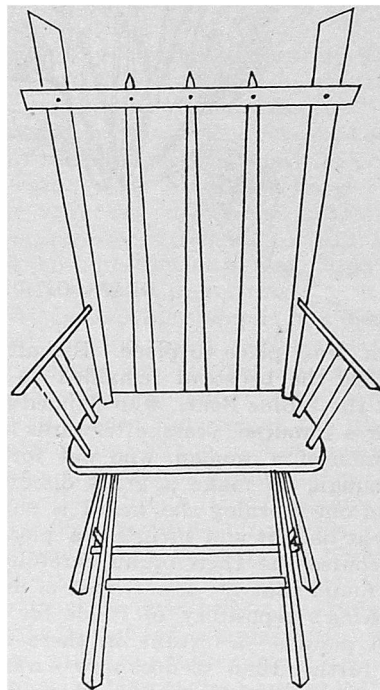
Parnassia Caroliniana.

THESE flowers, which are of a pale creamy tint, would look well on a strong red ground. If brightness of color be desired, tint the ground of the vase with capucine red and remove the color from the flowers and leaves. The veins in the leaves are a very pale green, in fact they are semi-transparent, and this gives them a greenish tint, compared to the color of the petal which is produced by a thin wash of mixing yellow. The leaves are rather dull, in color brown green, with a small quantity of capucine red added which will give it as nearly as possible. Shade them with the same color, the stems a light green. For them use moss green. The anthers of the proper stamens are nearly black and may be painted with ivory black mixed with a little blue. (See page 105.)

WE have obtained the following valuable foreign receipt for a size that may be used in the gilding of glass, china, metal and wood, giving more lustre to gilding than any other size. A pound of drying oil is placed in a metal vessel over a slow fire, and when brought to the boiling point, four ounces of finely powdered gum animi are gradually added, the boiling being continued until the whole is of a thick consistence, when it is strained through silk. This size is to be kept in a closely stoppered bottle. One of the features of the size, which is generally regarded as a trade secret by foreign artisans is that it will continue tacky longer and give more lustre to gilding than any other size.

ABOUT the middle of June the Towel Rack and Novelty Co., of Providence, will remove their works to Auburn, R. I., where they will have a new factory, 110 x 35 feet in size, and two stories in height, together with extensive drying houses, lumber sheds, etc. The change has been rendered necessary by the increasing demand for the firm's popular goods.

ELSEWHERE will be found the advertisement of the Jas. Dixon Crucible Co., who make extraordinary claims for their graphite paint. It is asserted that it covers more than double the surface of any other paint, is unaffected by heat, cold, dampness, salt air, mist or even acids. For tin roofs it is unequalled, and it answers as well on wood as on metal.



A YANKEE CHAIR.